

VZCZCXRO2203
PP RUEHPW
DE RUEHBUL #0044/01 0081258
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 081258Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6639
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000044

SIPDIS

KABUL FOR COS USFOR-A
DEPARTMENT FOR SCA-A, EUR/RPM, INL, INR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/05/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: GENERAL MCKIERNAN'S JANUARY 4, 2009 BRIEFING ON
THE AFGHAN PUBLIC PROTECTION FORCE (APPF)

Classified By: Classified By: Ambassador William Wood for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: GEN McKiernan briefed the ISAF (plus Japan) ambassadors January 4 on the pilot & Afghan Public Protection Force8 (APPF). He explained in detail how APPF is an Afghan-led initiative to achieve local security by having the district-level communities set up public guard forces under Interior Ministry (MOI) police supervision, and with the key involvement of several Afghan government (GIROA) agencies. He was emphatic that APPF does not involve the U.S. arming the tribes, a mistaken idea publicized by media stories. A separate cable will cover other aspects of GEN McKiernan,s briefing. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On January 4, GEN David McKiernan, Commander for USFOR-A and ISAF, briefed the ISAF (plus Japan)-nation ambassadors on a variety of activities supported by his command, including the "Afghan Public Protection Force8 (APPF). The APPF pilot will begin shortly (expected by March 1) in five districts of Maydan-Wardak. He corrected prominent errors in recent media stories by emphasizing that APPF will not arm the tribal militias, not recreate the failed auxiliary police, and not create armies for local power brokers.

¶3. (C) GEN McKiernan explained the program and the role of the United States. The program to improve local security through community self-reliance was proposed by President Karzai, developed with the advice of the Afghan cabinet, and will be "Afghan-led, bottom up and in keeping with Afghanistan,s history, rooted in local autonomy and structures.8 The objective is to empower local leaders (by district) while holding them responsible for the security of their community. APPF is designed to establish conditions under which local populations can be effectively linked to local governmental authorities, including provincial governors, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), the Afghan Intelligence Service (NDS), and the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG). APPF,s establishment will be facilitated by U.S. funding and ODA Special Forces.

¶4. (C) The program will shape the security environment at the village through district level using traditional Afghan culture and values by focusing on improved security, development and local governance (both infrastructure and capacity). The organization of ACOP, McKiernan said, starts with District Shuras, comprised of representatives of the whole community, not just tribes. The District Shuras will establish Community Councils of 30-50 members, which in turn select candidates for a 150-200 man "Public Protection Force.8 The &contract8 for the Community Public Protection Force will be between GIROA and the Community Councils, with funding flowing from MOI directly to the Community Councils. The guard candidates will be vetted by the MOI and NDS. These guards are envisioned as

Afghanistan,s first line of defense against insurgents and will be accountable to Community Councils and supervised by MOI. The district guards will not act outside district boundaries and their actions will be synchronized with local ANSF operations. McKiernan stressed the accountability⁸ part of the contract and that there would be GIROA follow-up action against any guards caught setting up illegal checkpoints or otherwise violating expectations. There will also be incentives in the form of development projects to the community as APPF takes hold.

15. (C) The Afghan National Army (ANA) will lead the training of the guards with ODA SOF assistance, if required, to train the trainers. The MOI will provide any weapons and ammunition, and CSTC-A and MOI will work jointly to account for these weapons. The U.S. will fund through CSTC-A the salaries, and any other equipment (such as radios) that public protection guards receive. In the discussion period, GEN McKiernan clarified several points. He said that none of the weapons supplied to the guards would come from the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) program, which collects and destroys illegal weapons (most of them ancient). He also explained that, since the U.S. was supporting the effort and not ISAF, there is no initiative to bring this project to the international Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB).

16. (C) Reaction from the ISAF ambassadors to this detailed briefing was generally positive. Christopher Alexander, the Deputy to Kai Eide, the Special Representative in Afghanistan of the UN Secretary General, said he applauded the APPF program but also characterized it as just one dimension in

KABUL 00000044 002 OF 002

the broader development effort in Afghanistan. The Netherlands rep was concerned about how the program would be evaluated and uncertain whether her government would support any program that armed communities. The Spanish Ambassador quoted Mao to warn of how the insurgents would adapt to this security program. The Turkish Ambassador said APPF sounded similar to a program pursued in his country for 30 years and outlined some pros and cons from Turkey,s experience. The Canadian Ambassador suggested a name change (from the name used in the briefing) to something that better described the program,s intent, like &community guard program.⁸ (Note: It has since been changed to Afghan Public Protection Force. End note.)

17. (C) Ambassador Wood emphasized how difficult the process had been to respond to President Karzai,s request. He had watched GEN McKiernan work with the Afghans and the careful thought that went into finding the right mix of national and local elements for the plan. He said that APPF was really the &Afghanization⁸ which everyone said they wanted, and that the initial project had to be taken seriously as a pilot with huge potential. His comment was well-received and strongly seconded by the UK Ambassador.

WOOD